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## Chapter Five

### Hide and Seek

*Where are we?  
What the hell is going on?  
This can't be happening.  
~ Imogen Heap, **Speak for yourself.***

\*Hours Earlier\*

Sleep evaded Molly Weasley. She flitted in and out of nightmares filled with Ginny, pregnant and alone. By 6 am, she got out of bed, and descended the staircase. Molly paused outside of her daughter's room, but decided to keep moving. *Ginny was responsible* she kept telling herself. *Ginny'll be fine.* Nonetheless, when she passed the handsome grandfather clock, she couldn't help to look at where the hands all pointed. None had moved.

Reasonably satisfied with this, Molly begun to prepare breakfast.

As time passed, the Weasley men, one by one, fumbled down the stairs wiping the sleep from their eyes. Molly looked to the staircase, hoping for the trail of a flowery night dress.

"Where's Gin?" asked Fred, feebly poking his eggs while George's head rested on the table, a small puddle of drool surrounding his mouth. It had appeared her absence hadn't gone unnoticed.

"I'll go see if she's up yet." Molly said, heading up the stairs. She was surprised, and a little nervous, to see her daughter's bed empty. Molly sighed, turned on the spot and apparated to a house down the road. She made careful point to land just outside of the wards. Just as she reached out to knock, she hesitated. How was she going to ask? She couldn't exactly tell the full story. She took a breath and rapped the knocker several times.

Lily Potter, a sensible yet young woman, answered the door, looking tired and frazzled. Molly smiled apologetically.

"Molly?" Asked Lily, still rubbing sleep from her eyes, "I don't mean to sound so rude, but why are you here at 7:45 on a Saturday?"

Molly shrugged and sighed "Can you send—can you ask—" Molly shook her head, and took a breath. "Could you send Ginny home?"

"Ginny?" Lily said, perplexed despite her state of drowsiness. "Why on earth would she be here...Molly, you took her—"

"Lily, who's at the door?" called a male voice, heading towards the door. James messy locks surrounded his face as he placed an arm around Lily's largely expanding waist.

"Hello James," Molly said, unable to help but smile at both of them.

"Hello Molly, what brings you here?"

"She's asking after Ginny."

James's confusion matched of his wife's.

"But didn't you take her home last night, I could have sworn—"

"I did...I just...I think she might be here."

Comprehension dawned on James's face as he looked shocked, but fought the beam that tried to splay across his face.

"Why don't you come in and take a sit as I go and see if she's upstairs." He stepped aside, allowing Molly to squeeze through the doorway.

"James, what on Earth—?"

"Lily," James lowered his voice. "Trust me. I think she's right. Let me just go check on Harry really fast. I'll be right back."

Harry? Why would—

"You're a smart girl, think hard about it."

Lily clapped hands over her mouth as the priceless look of shock claimed her features.

"No!" She whispered.

"I think so. And Molly thinks so. I'll be right back." James kissed his wife as she headed into the sitting room with Molly, giving James time.

He headed straight for his son's room, but paused, and headed to the guest bedrooms.

"What the bloody hell are you getting us up at—?"

"Shh...Sirius...Harry—"

"What about him?" Remus asked, sounding tired. "What type of trick do you have up you abnormally long sleeves?"

"He...he's a man now."

The look Lily had given him could not compare to those of Sirius and Lupin.

"You mean...last night?"

"Harry's been awfully quiet since last night."

"Yeah...Molly's looking for Ginny, and she looked here...and she thinks so. And with the way they acted last night..." James shook his head, unable to understand why he missed the signs.

"Wow...Prongs jr."

"Yeah..." was all James could say, running a hand through his hair. Sirius began to laugh. "What?" James asked, unsure how he felt. Sure, he was happy his son was a man, but Ginny was so young and Harry as well.

"Looks like those tickets to the World Cup aren't going to be as good as a gift as we thought."

"Sirius," Lupin admonished, punching him lightly on the arm. "That is *absolutely* disgusting. We are not comparing Quidditch tickets to Harry losing his—

"*Really* good Quidditch tickets," Sirius cut in.

"Enough." James said, rubbing his temples. "I'm happy and all, but I'd rather go check up on them and make sure they're alive and well."

The two nodded and followed James to his eldest sons room, expecting a sign of their union: haphazard clothing, lacy articles, or even the small scent of sex upon the air. None were found, and the bed was empty and untouched. Everything was pristine. As if...

"They were never here..." it dawned on James as the words tumbled out of his mouth exactly what it meant and fear gripped his heart. *No...it can't be...this is just normal parenting concern. They're fine. They aren't where they belong, and I'm just being paranoid. Nothing's wro—*

**BANG!**

James face whitened as he raced down the stairs, jumping down the last six steps, flying past Lily, his wand already out, Sirius and Remus not far behind. He flung the door open and ran towards the source of the noise, out by the old pond he and Lily used to spend their summer days away, long into the night. He remembered the look he gave her and how she fell into temptation. He grimaced as he knew deep within his heart, his son was there now, with Ginny, just as he was many years ago.

Fear gnawed at him as he saw the fast approaching figures of his son and his girlfriend being closely perused by a group of six or so men in distinct dark robes. Even at his distance he knew them, and felt all the breath in his body leave.

"Those can't be..."

James began to run faster, only a hundred meters away.

"Harry! Ginny!" He yelled, but was unheard over the yells of hexes and curses. He felt his stomach drop as his son turned to his girlfriend and held her tight—he was surrendering. "NO!" James yelled and sprinted faster, and a second, larger bang, occurred, throwing James and his company off their feet.

He couldn't think—everything was scrambled. He was bleeding—*why...whats going on...*—and everything was muffled, as if someone had stuck cotton in his ears. James tried to get up and stumbled as spots flitted in and out of vision. His knees buckled and begun to collapse when a pair of hands steadied him and held him firm.

James looked across the field, where smoke still rose in tendrils to the sky, empty: void of all persons but himself and his friends.

"Harry?" he voiced, to no one in particular.

"James...they've gone."

He didn't need to ask what he meant—James *knew*. He hung his head and wept, his body shaking from his cries of anguish, staring at the spot his son had so recently stood in.

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It took a moment for him to realize where he was. He assumed all had been a nightmare he had just woken from, and he was waking next to Ginny out by the pond, and that he should head home before anyone realized they weren't where they were supposed to be.

"Ginny?"

His voice felt broken...rough, almost foreign; as if it belonged to someone else, of a different life.

"Gin?" He begun to feel a stab of cold panic when she wasn't sitting beside him. Harry looked around desperately, trying to clear the fog in his mind to think clearly.

"How'd you know?"

Harry turned around to see Ginny sitting, her arms wrapped around her knees pulled up to her chest, her left cheek bruised and her arm bleeding—*oh god all that blood*. Her tone was calm—way too calm for someone to be bleeding that much.

"Ginny...what happened?"

"I could ask you the same thing."

It was the same cold, almost hard, tone. Harry didn't understand what was all happening and wished he could just think clearly.

"I really don't know Gin. I was sleeping, and I had the weirdest dream, and I woke up...and you're...you're hurt and I have no idea why."

"Did you get mixed up in something?" Her voice broke, and her fragility spilled over the surface. "Harry I wont be mad if you did, but...have you done something lately?" Her eyes were searching him desperately, hoping for an answer to what was going on. "Who are we dealing with here?"

Flashes of men in dark robes chasing them crashed over him. He shook his head to clear the images, wishing they'd go away.

"I don't know...I was dreaming about them and then...they were there."

She shook her head, her eyes wide with fear.

"No. You said...you *knew* they were coming...you can't just dream something and it becomes real!"

"I don't know how I did it...I just *did*, I guess. Ginny I'm in the dark as much as you here—

"But they wouldn't just come after you for no reason, Harry. There must have been something you did, maybe said something to the wrong crowd, I don't know."

She threw her hands up in the air, frustrated and upset. "Harry, I'm not saying you did anything wrong on purpose...but what if, what if we're caught up in a storm. What about our families? What about us? What are we going to do?"

Harry looked at her, wanting to give her the answers she deserved. He wished he had more of an answer than he did.

She looked at him, winded from her tirade and stress, her eyes searching him for answers he didn't have.

"What if they come back?"

Her voice was barely above a whisper. She struggled to stand, and swayed on the spot "We can't just stay here." The coppery flecks across her skin stood out more as her skin drained of most colour.

Harry stood quickly, despite the thick, confusing fog filling his brain, knowing all too well what would happen next. Time felt slowed as her eyes rolled into the back of her head and he caught her. Despite her generally light frame, he sunk to the ground with her dead weight. Her breathing was smooth and controlled, almost she had been in a deep, unawaking slumber. Her body was still besides the slow rising and falling of her chest, the deepest comfort Harry had. But this comfort was fleeting and he knew it. If she didn't wake up or got help soon...the rise and fall of her chest would cease all together.

His pulse quickened at the mere thought of it. The panic rat tried to gnaw at his fragile shell that kept him pieced together. *No*, he told himself, *I'll get help. She'll be fine. We'll be fine.* He repeated the words again and again until the rat was back in the black corners of his mind.

Now he could think.

Harry tucked one of his arms under her knees, and propped her head on his shoulder, and could feel the faint wind escaping her lips that brushed against his neck. He stood absolutely still, and after straining his ears for a sound that never came, he chose to head towards the lightest part of the forest, deciding it was the best place to start.

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James walked into the Potter household, supported on each side by Sirius and Remus.

Lily looked up at the entering group, expectant and hopeful through the tear tracks that stained her face. The hope evaporated near instantaneously as shock and despair rolled over her.

"No..."

It barely qualified as a whisper, but the entire house was silent that it came out more as an explosion.

"And...Ginny?" Molly asked, ashamedly hopeful that her daughter had fared better than their son.

Remus shook his head, knowing he (let alone James) couldn't form the words.

"Oh...My..." the sadness and horror splashed across her face, the fear reaching her deepest insides.

The look was replaced of one of motherly concern as Lily tried to rush to her feet, but Molly gently kept her in place.

"Dear, please do stay sitting. Think of yourself...think of the baby." Lily looked to protest, but after glancing at her enormous stomach, rethought and kept still.

For a woman in near paralyzing agony, she kept her head enough to ensure the others were taken care of. Sirius knew the emotions would too soon escape her control, but for now she was in control of not only of them, but the situation at hand.

"Remus," Molly said, looking to the man least injured, "what happened?"

"D—Death Eaters...they ambushed them. They didn't stand a chance."

Molly's face (among Lily's) whitened several shades.

"Are they...are they..." she couldn't force herself to say the final words, afraid saying them would only solidify the fact.

Remus shook his head. "No...I don't think so. They...they—it kind of looked like they disappeared."

Both women's faces looked up, pink with hopefulness.

Lily stared at her husband, near collapsing. "James, did you teach him how to?"

James, to his credit, thought hard and shook his head.

"But," Molly started, "it's been well documented in situations that people in extreme occasions have disappeared perfectly or near perfectly, despite no training or

theory. Arthur tells me about its happenings quite often enough. Isn't it possible they simply had accidental magic and disappeared?"

"Well..." Sirius and Remus exchanged looks. Yes, it was possible. But the way the disappeared at the precise moment as the Death Eaters left them feeling uneasy about the former idea. "It is a possibility...but Molly, its much more probable that they're with the Death Eaters right now."

"Which means for the mean time, they're alive."

This they could not disagree with. For the moment, they were alive. But the situation made death seem almost a better option.

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It wasn't until he had been walking for almost an hour, holding her tightly against his chest, that he allowed the burning tears to escape his eyes and silently cried. Tacitly begging for her to stay alive.

Alive long enough to be found.

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**A/N:** I took a six month hiatus between the finishing of this chapter and the previous. Things such as life, and drama, and celebration all got in the way. And yet, thankfully, due to all of that, I am able to write with better conviction of these things because I'm not just writing what I *think* would be the case, but of what I know to be. Watching someone deteriorate or fear that you have lost someone is much more real to me than it ever was before. Some I have seen happen and some of which has happened to me.

Thank you ever so much to Taylor (again) for allowing me to use her description of watching me lose consciousness and the stabs of fear that I would never wake up again, and for pointedly correcting me that "you didn't *gracefully arch backwards*, sweetheart—you went down like a sack of potatoes" and bothered me about it until I had changed that fact. Yeah, I agree...it did sound a little too poetic.

And thank you to Shawn, who gave me inspiration for how to bring something together in a relative sense of practicality. After all, how more real can I get than life experiences? We all kid that deep down, I'm not all that good of a writer. Just a good story tweaker to fit my own purposes. He he.